

Message Text

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ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 AID-05 SP-02 L-03 EB-07 OMB-01

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 TRSE-00 /043 W

----- 042030

R 271701Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3161

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANJUL 0208

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG PFOR US GA

SUBJECT: THE GAMBIA'S ATTITUDE ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES

REF: STATE 37591

1. EMBASSY'S RESPONSE TO REQUESTED INFORMATION IS KEYED TO FIVE QUESTIONS POSED PARA 7 REFTEL. CHARGE, AS ONLY SUBSTANTIVE OFFICER IN THREE-PERSON EMBASSY, WILL ALSO SERVE AS MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS OFFICER.

2. GAMBIA IS MOST INTERESTED IN DERIVING MORE ECONOMIC BENEFITS FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, CATEGORY IN WHICH GAMBIA WAS PLACED DURING 1975 FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE GAMBIA LOBBYING EFFORT IN NEW YORK. GAMBIA USES RHETORIC OF NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER, BUT CAN BE PERSUADED TO SUPPORT PRACTICAL INITIATIVES IN ECONOMIC SPHERE. COUNTRY MAINTAINS SEVEN OVERSEAS DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS (ONLY FOUR OF WHICH ARE OUTSIDE AFRICA, AND NONE IN U.S.). WE ARE NOT AWARE ANY GAMBIAN CANDIDACIES FOR POSITIONS IN EXTRA-AFRICAN MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS.

3. GAMBIA IS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THIRD WORLD ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS OAU, NON-ALIGNED, AND ARAB LEAGUE. HOWEVER, GAMBIA EXERCISES INDEPENDENT THINKING AND HAS OPPOSED THIRD WORLD STEAMROLLER ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. IN NON-ALIGNED FORUMS, GAMBIA EXERTS MODERATE LINE, BUT IS REALISTIC IN ACCEPTING THAT
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ITS VIEWS DO NOT CARRY GREAT WEIGHT. FOR EXAMPLE, GAMBIA HAS

BEEN SUPPORTIVE SOUTH KOREAN POSITION IN VARIOUS FORUMS,
DESPITE OVERWHELMING NON-ALIGNED SENTIMENT TO CONTRARY.

4. WHILE GAMBIA DOES BRIEF DELS PRIOR THEIR LEAVING BANJUL,
IN PRACTICE DEL CHIEFS HAVE GREAT LATITUDE IN INTERPRETING
INSTRUCTIONS. COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN DELS AND CAPITAL ARE
ALWAYS DIFFICULT, THUS CONTROL VERY HARD TO ASSERT FROM
BANJUL. WE DOUBT OVER-ALL EFFECTIVENESS DEL FEEDBACK TO MINEXTAFF
DURING COMPLICATED MANEUVERING AT UN OR IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL
MEETINGS.

5. USUALLY, GAMBIAN PERMREP IN NEW YORK (TEMPORARY POSITION
CREATED EACH GA, OFTEN INVOLVING DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS FROM ONE
YEAR TO NEXT), HICOM IN LONDON, AND AMBASSADOR IN BRUSSELS (WHO
BETWEEN THEM COVER MEETINGS IN EUROPE) HAVE WIDE DISCRETION TO
INTERPRET GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FROM BANJUL. NONE OF THESE
REPRESENTATIVES HAVE STRONG INDEPENDENT POWER BASE IN GAMBIA,
NOR COULD THEY OPENLY DEFY DIRECT PRESIDENTIAL ORDER. NONETHELESS,
THERE HAVE BEEN CASES IN WHICH WHAT WE FEEL IN BANJUL ARE FIRM
GOTG COMMITMENTS BECOME TRANSLATED INTO SOMETHING LESS ASSURED
BY THE GAMBIAN DEL IN NEW YORK.

6. GOTG IS ALWAYS WILLING TO LISTEN SYMPATHETICALLY TO U.S.
POSITION ON ANY IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL ISSUE. OFTEN LACKING
SOME OF BASIC FACTS IN GIVEN CASE, GAMBIAN LEADERS MOST APPRE-
CIATIVE INFORMATIONAL ASPECT U.S. PRESENTATIONS. GOTG DOES NOT
OFTEN SEEK USG SUPPORT ON MULTILATERAL MATTERS, BUT DID REQUEST
OUR ASSISTANCE IN GAINING UN RECOGNITION ON LIST OF LEAST
DEVELOPED, AND WAS DEEPLY APPRECIATIVE OUR EVENTUAL SUPPORT.
GOTG IS AWARE THAT WE LINK POSITIONS ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES
WITH OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, BUT NEEDS REGULAR REMINDERS OF
SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH WE REGARD INTER-RELATIONSHIP.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BANJUL00208
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760076-0836
From: BANJUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976027/aaaaafgh.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 37591
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <31 MAR 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <29 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE GAMBIA'S ATTITUDE ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES
TAGS: PORG, PFOR, US, GA, XX
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006